

The **C**hallenge

of the **P**resent

By J. H. Langenwalter

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THE CHALLENGE OF THE PRESENT

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THREE LECTURES

- » Christ Calling
- » Ye Shall Receive Power
- » The Need for Discipline and Dedication

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Foreword

THE CHALLENGE OF THE PRESENT

The three chapters of this booklet were delivered before the Young Christian Workers' Institute held at Bethel College August 13-15, 1944. The subjects of these chapters had been selected by a committee of young men in consultation with members of several Conference Boards.

The meeting was sponsored by the Board of Education.

The author attempted to answer the questions of youth then. The same questions are confronting youth more acutely than ever. For that reason this publication has been arranged by members of the Peace Committee.

These chapters are not meant to be the last word on the subjects selected by young men but are intended as an encouragement to promote thinking suggested by Him whose Name we bear.

J. H. Langenwalter.

Christ Calling

Above the din and the roar of the results of man's follies and sin there rises still the Voice of "The Son of Man." The overtones of our lives tend to confuse our judgments as to the real values of the cadences of that Voice. The volume of our own noises leads us to fear, to suspect and even to believe that that Voice has been silenced. Sometimes men even wonder whether it has ever been raised in this world of ours.

The true value of voices is not confined to or limited by measurements on the basis of mechanical laws. There is something about voices which is at least as individual and as distinctive as there is about our faces and our fingertips. We do not evaluate the latter on the basis of length, breadth and thickness. They have a value far above this type of measurement. That is no less true of voices.

The appreciation of voices comes with correct hearing. It has been found that many of the so called problem children, brought into Juvenile Courts, have defective hearing. They do not understand because they do not hear or clearly distinguish the voices about them. That makes them misunderstood in the home, in the school and in the neighborhood. That is why they often become easy prey for selfish-minded people who lead them into illegal and immoral ways.

These children do not know why they are in trouble. They have no way of knowing. Others do not know because they have never really tried to find out. Relatives and friends often pity themselves instead of applying themselves to find out the facts.

We are told by those who have interested themselves in the welfare of such unfortunate children that defective hearing means much more than a mere lack of hearing. Children have been found who could hear sounds but could not distinguish them. Others can hear and distinguish sound of a certain pitch but cannot do so when voices are pitched too high or too low for them.

These findings, which have resulted from a careful study in the realm of the physical hearing of people, also find application in the realm of the intellectual and spiritual hearing of people. Perhaps a more careful study of Jesus' frequent reference to hearing may yet bear rich fruit in a better understanding of Him and His teachings.

In our attempt to deal with the "Call" of Jesus we shall base our deductions and conclusions mostly upon the four Gospels as found

in the New Testament. In them we find descriptive material concerning the attitudes of Jesus. We do this in the hope that this material may prove helpful to us as we attempt to learn to hear His Voice more clearly and to understand Him more correctly in our own day.

A. Jesus looked upon any need as a call to action. This attitude on His part has always been understood only by a relatively few. Men have always preferred the shroud of mystery to clarity of understanding. For that reason the great majorities have failed to "hear" His Voice in the realm of human needs and have often suspected those who did.

1. Men did not understand the Voice of Jesus when He plead for the needs of childhood. He wanted children to be free to come to Him. Even His disciples wanted children to be kept in their place. That place had been assigned to children by a social system which knew not the ways of God, despite much religious ceremonialism. Children and dogs had always been found in the streets, therefore, children belonged in the streets. That was the easy solution of the unthinking. The needs of children in body, mind and spirit were of little concern to such. They were too busy with their own interests. They had forgotten their own childhood.

2. The attitude toward the needs of women, especially mothers, fell largely upon morally deaf ears in His day and for ages afterward. One wonders how thoughtfully He must have observed and studied His own mother during those long years in the home with her as obedient son, elder brother and co-provider of other children who came to bless that home, and to add to its burdens. One as alert as Jesus would see at least as much as the average adolescent boy of today! What He saw there found expression later in His attitude toward mothers longing for a word of encouragement from one such as He. He blessed their children. He took them into His arms and thus gave new heart to their mothers.

Jesus restored children to mothers who, with fear-bound hearts stood by helplessly as they watched the little sufferers waste away.

Jesus gave encouragement to potential mothers, real or vicarious. He treated the discouraged Mary as a real human being who had the intellectual and spiritual capacity to choose "The Better Part." He did not hesitate to meet the needs of women whom the cruel lusts of men had branded. He led the woman at the Sychar well with great patience until she heard and understood His Voice above the cruel wrongs and heartless customs of her age and then He released her to become a messenger of good news to the very

people who had condemned her to be an outcast. He gave selfish men an opportunity to understand the needs of one of their victims when He asked anyone who was without sin to throw the first condemning stone at her. He was unabashed when He found Himself alone with that woman. He encouraged her to choose the better way—to select better company which would not lead her into sin again. He also left an undying commentary on the accusing men who sneaked out in answer to His challenge to fire away with their stones, IF they were without sin—if they had not done that which was wrong in the sight of God when they knew better!

Jesus frequently made it clear to men that God had created human kind male AND female and that this complementary intent of God could be maintained only through Love. He took the position that lust is the enemy of all that is fine, beautiful and strengthening in human relationships such as His Father had in mind of men, women and children. This attitude constituted a distinct call on the part of Jesus nineteen centuries ago and is no less a basic call in, to and for our own day.

Only a relatively few men heard the Voice of Jesus in His day. That was a great loss for that day. That has been true of the weary centuries which have passed since then. It has been literally true that the highest ideals of human civilization have had to be carried forward by a "hopeless minority." This minority was not hopeless itself, else it had not carried on. They were considered hopeless because of their fewness in number by those who were deaf to the Voice of the Christ, due to the noises of their selfish lives. That lack of hearing has cost mankind dearly in degeneration of the home life so necessary to the well-being of human society.

3. Jesus saw the needs of youth. At twelve years of age, when He was first taken to the temple to be inducted into the meaning of manhood through the prescribed rites of His people, He stayed overtime because He was not satisfied at the end of the eighth day. He defended Himself by asking whether even His mother did not know that His first interest was with His Father!

This incident was followed by eighteen silent, thoughtful years during which He saw youth dragged to the galleys, bludgeoned to the drudgery of slaves, held under suspicion and driven, through desperation, to acts of violence or browbeaten into a state of broken-spirited sullenness. He saw scores of them trying to "save" their people from the cruel oppression of the Roman yoke. He saw that they all tried to gain their end by the use of force and that

they all came to naught. He found them starved in body, mind and spirit and observed that some of them were ready to sell themselves to the enemy as collectors of taxes—blood money—from their own people.

Toward all of these Jesus took the attitude of The Great Friend. He began His "Beautiful Sayings" by announcing that He considered the "poor in spirit"—those who knew they had needs—as the kind of material out of which God could build up His Kingdom. He called Matthew from the Roman tax gatherer's table in order to make him the master messenger to his people whom Matthew, in his desperation, had not only deserted but also betrayed.

Jesus contributed nothing to the passing conceits of youth but He did all in His power to build up their self-respect. Here again the need of an inexperienced, unprepared, misguided, mistreated and much maligned group constituted for Jesus a great call to action.

It is noteworthy that throughout the centuries it has been youth who have heard the Voice of Jesus most clearly. It is remarkable to note how much the four Gospels and the lives of the followers of Jesus in every era, since He walked upon this earth, have contributed to this result. Take, for example, the life of Schereschewsky, the Jewish youth of Russia, who asked his priest for the best guide book to the city of Jerusalem and was told, with violent signs of derision, that the four Gospels of the Christians were the best guide to the Holy City. As this youth walked from Northern Russia to Jerusalem, he not only committed the Gospels to memory, he also caught the Spirit of Him whom they described. Upon his arrival at Jerusalem he asked a Christian leader where he could find the most difficult field of labor. He was told that China was that field. All arguments to the contrary, he prepared himself to go to China. The results of his work for the good of that Nation in the fields of Literature and Religion read almost like a fairy tale. He helped to simplify the language and to make it available to large numbers of the Chinese people who had been denied that privilege before. He made copious translations of the Bible and other literature in spite of creeping palsy and, according to his physician, lived for months by sheer will in order to accomplish his task. The story of his life which appeared in the *Missionary Review of the World* early in this century ought to be in the hands of every youth who wants to meet a real task such as the Christ is calling us to see and undertake.

4. Jesus saw the needs of men. Many of these were not at home. They had been taken away on one pretext or another.

Their going away was usually of a permanent nature. That had its effect on those who remained behind.

When He first called men to follow Him, Jesus challenged them to study the ways of men as fishermen study the ways of fish. This was a call to learn to understand the needs of men, and to meet them helpfully. It is interesting to note that the "common people," mostly men, heard Him gladly. They caught the intent of His call to action.

Jesus also met the needs of men in the realm of encouragement. When three cities, who prided themselves on some material advantage, had turned Him down and out, He did not complain but turned to discouraged people about Him and said, "Come to me, all who are labouring and burdened, and I will refresh you. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find your souls refreshed; my yoke is kindly and my burden is light." (Moffatt)

With Jesus personal problems were to be solved through personal contacts and on personal levels. He wanted men who were willing to learn. He sought them out individually; not in large crowds. He wanted men who cared and who showed this through recognition of their needs. He placed high the man who is willing to find his place and to fill it well—to the best of his ability. Jesus helped men to see that righteousness is not an academic term but has a real meaning which touches human lives as closely as do food and drink. He did all in His power to help men meet life and its problems in kindly, fearless, helpful ways. He challenged them to come clean in their attitudes.

Jesus found that men were misguided and were walking on inadequate ways of life. This made them restless, unsatisfied and even dissatisfied. They needed peace which, according to Jesus, is that inward poise and satisfaction which are necessary for the normal functioning of human beings. This need can be met by adopting His Way of Life, intended for all mankind. This Way of Life demands all that men can offer at their best. Jesus was both wise and honest enough to make that clear. He was no dictator who imagines that he has something to defend which he neither has nor understands. He aimed at the development of all of the qualities of manhood for great and helpful ends.

We call Him the Gentle Jesus. His call makes men strong. And these two thoughts are perfectly compatible. Gentleness is not weakness. It is that greater strength which men fear because it is so new to their way of thinking and so different from the ways of most men of their day. They also fear it because of its far-

reaching possibilities toward the achievement of the good which they laud but in which they are only superficially interested.

5. Jesus met old men with courtesy and with thought provoking information. Now and then one of these became His follower. Among these we think especially of Nicodemus and the Scribe who asked Jesus, "What commandment is the first of all?"

Nicodemus was a man of affairs. He was a member of the Sanhedrin, the most powerful organization of the Jewish people in that day. He came as an inquirer. Jesus gave him such a revolutionary view of life that it made a new kind of man of him. It was all done with such fine courtesy and with such convincing strength that Nicodemus dared to do things which he would never have dreamed of doing before.

In the case of the Scribe it is especially noteworthy that he saw the futility of the formal, ceremonial practices which had been his primary interest in the past. Jesus' emphasis on Love showed him a genuineness of which he had never dreamed. Despite the wrongs which Jesus had suffered from the Scribes He met *this* Scribe's honest effort to see clearly by saying, "Thou art not far from the Kingdom of God."

The call of Jesus was universal because His interests are for the good of all mankind. Men did not appreciate His attitude then because they preferred their own rationalizations, interpretations and traditions to His way of Life. They heard Him calling but they did not listen to what He tried to say. They became contemptuous and furious because they sensed something in His attitude which they were not ready to meet. They put Him to the cross in order to get rid of Him. They did not silence His call! Their selfishness made them blind to the greater facts of life. That confused people generally but it did not change the facts which confronted all of them. It is well to remember this in our own day.

Jesus called men through what He taught. He took up the message of the courageous martyr, John the Baptist, whose "Repent ye" had deeply moved the people of Palestine. The purpose of Jesus was to lead people to re-think their ways. They all sensed that there was something wrong. Nobody seemed to wonder seriously about a possible better way. They added to the strain and confusion of the whole situation by trying to settle matters through combat with others who were in the same kind of predicament as themselves. This led to no good end but nobody seemed to sense that fact. To many who heard the call of Jesus, re-think meant to think for the first time. That is why they had been as blind men following blind leaders.

The statements of Isaiah, John the Baptist and Jesus about repentance can be read so that they sound like threats. They mean more if they are read as the presentation of new opportunities. All of these leaders of their people were urgent, but they were also kind. They were neither tyrants nor dictators; they were teachers and leaders, and Jesus was the greatest of them. He persisted until it hurt Him in more ways than mankind has fully realized even yet. He thoroughly believed that His Father had endowed men to think, hence He made it His purpose to help them think at all and then to do better thinking than they had even thought of doing. Only in this way can human problems be solved. These problems are personal and require a personal basis for their solution.

Jesus found men filled with many fears. He taught them the futility of fears. "Fear not," "Be ye not afraid" and "why are ye so fearful" are expressions showing the deep concern of Jesus that men should learn to slough off their fears lest they lose themselves. His approach was not merely negative. He did not ask men to give up something without offering them something more valuable in its stead. That something was Love. When He spoke of Love He thought of the great God-like quality of Love which becomes the great motivating power of life rather than of the fitful, unstable emotional manifestations of men so often called love.

Jesus asked men to love supremely—with all that they are and have. This attitude was to be directed toward God, toward one's fellow human beings and towards one's self. Such an attitude lifts one above the accidents and incidents of undirected or misdirected relationships of life.

The great motivating power of life, which Jesus called Love was not supposed to serve merely as an ornament. It was intended to move to action consistent with the possibilities which God had placed within, around and above us. In the light of this fact Jesus taught men to do the will of the Father. That did not mean a new type of slavery. On the lips of Jesus "My Father" was a description of the character of God and not merely a theological expression or a bit of ceremonial veneer. In the light of this fact it follows that doing the will of the Father means doing those things which lead us to understand God and His attitude of fatherly Love toward us. When we do the will of the Father we are working for the good of mankind under the guidance of God.

Insofar as men have learned to understand this attitude of Jesus, they have learned to see that the Kingdom of God idea and

the home idea are basically the same. Both make for practical oneness between God and men and between men. This oneness results from an attitude of Love and faithfulness toward each other.

The emphasis of Jesus upon right relationships shows itself in His teachings about justice. With Him justice is not a hard legal term but an essential part of a right attitude toward God, toward one's neighbors and toward one's self. It is as close to us, and as essential, as the daily needs of life. It was this practical touch in the teachings of Jesus about the Kingdom of God which raised the meaning of this term above imperialistic kingdom ideas on the one hand and saved it from otherworldly dreams on the other. Men were to seek the Kingdom of God first because it is made up of people who have certain attitudes and qualifications of character which make it possible for God to work out His plans for the good of mankind. The emphasis on seeking the Kingdom of God first was Jesus' way of helping people to avoid learning the great lessons of life the hard way.

In His teachings Jesus did not overlook the responsibilities of men. They have a part to play. They are to bear fruit, to be useful, to wield influences which will enrich lives—their own and those of others. He told those who had expressed willingness to be His disciples—to learn from Him—that they were to be as useful for people as salt is for food or as light is for life.

Jesus did not regiment his disciples. He recognized their capacities to think, to feel and to decide. For this reason He took certain important matters for granted among His followers. He used the phrase "When ye" most effectively in such matters as doing good—being helpful, praying—putting forth consecrated, expectant effort God-ward, and being willing to lead a sacrificial life—willing to pay a price.

This was a strange way for a leader to teach His followers nineteen centuries ago, and it is a strange way in our own day of multiplying regimentations. Nevertheless, it is a most effective way of calling people to be themselves at their best.

Jesus called men through who He was. A lesser man might have used the same words about himself that Jesus did and have become a menace to his followers. Jesus meant what He said about Himself, not as an expression of self-exaltation but as a matter of insight into His character and of encouragement to those who heard Him. That kind of encouragement constitutes a most effective call to His followers also to lead truly worth while lives.

When Jesus said, "I am the Way," He assured people that there was a way where they saw none, a way adequate for their needs

and possibilities. He is that way personified.

When He said, "I am the Truth," He helped men to see that beyond the incidents of life there lie great facts whose timeless values we need to learn. When that has been achieved we have found the Truth. Jesus was the personification of that Truth to His age insofar as men recognized Him as He revealed Himself to them.

When Jesus said, "I am the Life," He brought the real meaning of existence to the very doors of the minds of men. In Him they saw true life personified.

When He said, "I am the Door," He opened the vistas of new possibilities of life to His followers and made Himself personally responsible to furnish them opportunities to enter into that larger vista.

When Jesus claimed, "Before Abraham was I am," He showed men the timeless meaning of life which is under the direction of character more than the calendar. What a call to *live* instead of merely marking time!

When Jesus answered the question of the mob in the garden on the eve of His crucifixion by saying, "I am He," the members of that mob fell back, not for physical reasons but because they had come into the presence of the One who had powers of helpfulness free from the fears which blinded them and their morally blind drivers.

When Jesus said, "The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath," He showed men that He stood for the realities of right relationships more than for meticulously performed ceremonial functions.

Hundreds of years later the Voice of Christ was raised to the organized Church saying, "The Son of Man is Lord of the Church." He meant the Kingdom of God. The leaders of the established Church meant buildings, organizations, ceremonial rituals and worldly power. They prided themselves on these things and persecuted those who heard the call of the Christ.

That selfsame Voice is calling once again. "The Son of Man is Lord of the Bible." This remarkable book is an unretouched negative of the way people have lived under all kinds of conditions and in all kinds of ways. Jesus would have us use it in the spirit of love and not as a fetish to increase the fears of men at a time like this.

The great "I AM" statements of Jesus constitute a call of the Christ to us today. This is worthy of our closest attention, our best efforts to understand and our most devoted willingness to apply ourselves under the guidance of His Spirit!

My young Friends, you who are compelled to face the complex aftermaths of the generation in which we live, I invite you to face frankly the overwhelming needs which are now being laid as a great burden upon humanity. These needs constitute a clear call to try a better way than has been tried in the past. The babel of voices already rising from the lips of those who feel sure that they have found a final solution will soon die down and leave humanity in despair once more. This of all times in the history of this civilization calls for ears that can hear the Voice of the Christ calling across the past centuries. The weird and strident voices of this century with its endless evidences of spiritual bankruptcy make it needful that we have "ears that hear." Men have spent nearly a half century talking about the needs of men and have ignored the greatest of them—life free from human dissensions. Where the Voice of Christ has really been heard these dissensions have been reduced to a remarkable degree.

I invite you to become intimately acquainted with the Spirit of the teachings of Jesus until, in the sacred quiet of your own spirits, you will feel the inspiring tug at your hearts to follow Him as He walks among men, women and children today. He is suffering a new crucifixion because my generation heard not His call clearly.

I invite you to learn to appreciate Him to the fullness of your growing capacities. Then His Voice will be able to direct you step by step in the twentieth century which is as confusing to you as the first century was to the youth of that day.

If you accept these invitations in the spirit in which they are given you will not only hear the Christ Calling you; you will also look forward to the fulfillment of His promise, "And ye shall receive power!"

"Ye Shall Receive Power"

One cannot read the four Gospels with any degree of care without becoming conscious of the fact that Jesus thought much in the realm of power. To Him it was very real and very vital. He looked upon His Father as The One from whom men receive power. He looked upon power as something of vital importance to His followers. He called it "dunamis." However, He would hardly approve of the use to which that word was put some years ago when someone displayed the dangers of a little learning by making a new translation of the New Testament in which he put the word "dynamite" wherever the word power appears in the other translation.

Jesus looked upon power as something so great and so important that He used it, and expected others to use it, only for great ends. That is why He makes it a matter of promise to His disciples. They are to receive power when they have prepared themselves to use it aright.

Among the four writers of the Gospels Luke seems to have sensed Jesus' idea of power most fully. Perhaps the experiences of his own life contributed to this appreciation. It seems possible, and even probable, that Luke had a Greek father and a Jewish mother. That placed him into that unfortunate class of people known as hybrids. The pride of the Greek and the pride of the Jew would be sufficient to break the spirit of any normal boy unless he received power to overcome the handicaps of his situation. He must have known all of the agonies which come to a child who is different when he discovers the truth about the abuse of power in the case of social prejudices and hatreds.

We are not told why Luke did not become bitter and use his abilities to rail against the unfair fight which he had been called upon to wage. One wonders whether there was not a day, or perhaps it was an evening, when he heard a voice the like of which he had never heard before and looked into a pair of eyes whose luster attracted him for life. He also may have heard the gentle yet powerful "Follow Me" which had come to others. It is not impossible that he, who had suffered so much pain because of wrongs inflicted upon him, chose to become a healer rather than one who causes new wounds. He had met the Great Healer, he also would become a healer! We know him as Luke the Physician. Behind this expression there lie many interesting possibilities. Only the rich had physicians then. They wanted well trained men

upon whom they could depend. That would mean years of hard work preparing one's self for the career of a physician. And when that training period was ended one found one's self face to face with the custom that one was made a slave so that the rich patron could be sure of having a physician at hand when he wanted him. However many or few of these possibilities came to Luke we are not told. What we are told is that he maintained himself in the spirit of a healer who had caught the vision and the inspiration of the Great Physician and that he used his powers in most helpful ways for the good of others.

He did not confine his powers of healing to the bodies of men. His experiences with Theophilus show that in a most interesting way. Here was a man, probably a young man, who was possibly a full blooded Greek and perhaps one of high rank. He bore a name which indicates that he was interested in the gods. How these two men met we are not told. We do know that Luke addressed two long letters to Theophilus. The one was to tell Theophilus of Jesus, the Ideal Man, after whom all thinking Greeks sought. A careful reading of the introductory paragraphs to the Gospel according to Luke and of the Acts of the Apostles leads one to believe that Luke succeeded in leading his pupil to become a follower of the Great Healer. The second letter, which we call the book of Acts, was written to show the new convert how the followers of Jesus had lived and what they had to expect both from the world in which they lived and from Him whom they had chosen to follow. That was practicing the art of healing in accordance with the Spirit of Jesus.

The closing paragraph of the first letter and the opening paragraph of the second both deal with the idea of power in a most interesting and challenging way. Our theme is taken from the opening paragraph in the second letter which immediately follows the introduction. The complete quotation reads as follows: "But ye shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

Jesus had just spent the forty days since His resurrection speaking about the Kingdom of God. That had been His message to the world for three years. Then there had been an interruption of less than three days through the crucifixion. After men had exhausted their capacities to express their fears of one whom they feared because their lives were self-centered, God had stepped in and called Him back to the performance of His mission of healing. Joy and fears were strangely mingled in the minds and feelings of

people generally. They acted almost like bewildered children who do not understand their best friend and who naively betray the major motives of their lives.

The disciples are a clear example of such a state of mind on the day when Jesus departed from them for the last time in the form in which they had known Him for three years. They asked for the restoration of the Kingdom of Israel. Politically that kingdom had been dead for 750 years. Asking for it now was like an old man in his dotage demanding to have the playthings of his childhood returned to him. The answer of Jesus is significant. “It is not for you to know times or seasons, which the Father hath set within His own authority.”

Having thus dealt with the weaknesses of His followers, Jesus told them of the power awaiting them as we saw in the paragraph quoted above. They had asked Him for the power which they thought to find in a bit of ground not over 160 miles long and not over 80 miles wide which lay at the doorstep of three great divisions of the earth. He had promised them power over the whole earth! They had their thoughts still centered in the power of the Kingdom of Israel with a very doubtful history; He had shown them the possibilities of the Power of the Kingdom of God! Then He had vanished from their sight. The choice was theirs. No wonder they were so dumbfounded that it took strangers to shake them out of their fear-bound reveries.

All kingdoms of the earth have sought power. They needed power to maintain themselves. That is why they sought balance of power as human society became more complex.

The Kingdom of God *uses* power for the good of all mankind. That is why Jesus opened the minds of His followers. It requires open minds to use the power which God stands ready to entrust to His children. Those who “walked with God” from the days of Enoch until now are the ones who looked upon this wonderful Universe with open eyes and open minds and who showed their appreciation by making good use of the opportunities given them.

Those who appreciate power enough to use it intelligently have always been called upon to suffer by a generation which sought power for its own ends. Even Jesus could not escape suffering at the hands of those He had come to serve.

Suffering is not defeat. It may lead to physical death, but even that is not defeat. Those who killed Jesus did not reckon with this fact. They thought that they had gained their end when the words, “It is finished” had fallen from His dying lips. They had not sensed that God, whom Jesus had not only called Father but with

whom He had lived as a devoted Son, would step in as soon as they had had their supreme chance, and restore the One who had faithfully used the powers granted Him. We speak of the resurrection of Jesus. In a very meaningful sense it was a restoration of Jesus. He returned with undiminished power. That set men to re-think their ways. It led them to understand the character of God more clearly in the light of what Jesus had taught them in times past. They began to realize that He had something which they lacked but needed sorely.

Men had done that which was contrary to the will of God when they knew better. They had hoped to stave off the evil day by all kinds of means. After the astounding revelations of power on the part of Jesus, which they had witnessed recently, they began to realize that Jesus knew what He was talking about when He had assured them that His Father remits sins. That is where the selfish abuse of power and the unselfish use of power come to grips. The former seeks power to subdue and control men; the latter uses power to help them.

The fact that Jesus was leaving them did not affect the status of men in the sight of the Father. His promise was that there should be another One whom they could call to their side. It is significant that that is the way Jesus introduced the idea of the Holy Spirit to His followers. He speaks of them as being "clothed" with power. The expression is borrowed from the custom of placing a robe upon anyone who was empowered to represent those in authority. As so often, Jesus used an old expression and filled it with a new meaning. His followers were to be empowered to carry out the will of His Father in the Spirit of that Father, as Jesus had represented Him to men throughout His three years of ministry on earth.

John the Baptist had led men to re-think their ways. Jesus offered them the equipment with power to live and to act in accordance with the will of the Father. That introduced them to a kingdom idea which was altogether foreign to their past ways of thinking. It led to a new definition of the meaning of power for them. It made them realize why it was none of their business to trouble themselves about past history and the futile attempts of men which it portrayed. It brought home to them something of that great relationship between Jesus and the Father which He had mentioned with increasing emphasis during the days when men were repudiating His idea of power and returning to that of self-seeking rulers. It also made them come to the realization that it was their business to really try the power which Jesus had of-

ferred them so long and so patiently in order that they might become the kind of people they hoped to become in their best moments. The full realization of this important situation came upon about 5000 of them rather suddenly. The history which these made is very interesting and very important. It was characterized by a real revelation of power as Jesus thought of it.

They became martyrs—those who witnessed for Him with their all, even including their existence upon earth. It is noteworthy that the New Testament uses only one word for testimony and for martyrdom. Their testimony neither missed nor stopped with Jerusalem. It might have been easier to leave Jerusalem and go into some foreign part of the earth. However, Jerusalem was in dire need of the message of Jesus whom she had so lately and so futilely tried to crowd out of the picture. These newly convinced followers soon discovered that the real power which man may receive is inclusive rather than exclusive and that arbitrary geographical lines have very little meaning for those who sincerely put that power to the use which God has in mind.

Men and women in all walks of life began to realize that they need have no fears about having lost Jesus. The "Promise of the Father" kept them so busy adjusting themselves to the new opportunities that they did not worry about what had once made them filled with fears and troubled in heart. The joy of a new kind of achievement had become theirs. Ten days in fellowship and communion with each other had led them to understand the truth about Jesus, as well as the fulfillment of Scripture, as He understood it. That left them free to really do the kind of things He had tried to tell them about. Class distinctions and other old prejudices had left them with surprising suddenness when the promised power had entered their lives.

During the latter months of His stay with them, Jesus had often spoken of being at one with the Father. His enemies had called Him a blasphemer for this attitude. His most intimate associates had taken the attitude that He was no longer fully accountable. They had looked for One who would enter upon the life of the world as the supreme Dominator. His representative, the Messiah, was to show them the way in which they could profit most through this Dominator. They were to be the favored class, nation, race. His attitude did not fit into that scheme of things. It was too simple, too insipid! He had talked too much about a suffering Messiah. Isaiah had done the same thing but that was a long time ago. Isaiah was now a saint and his message was to be revered for that reason but it need not be understood and certainly it was

not to be applied to their affairs or to members of the Kingdom for which they looked. Least of all was suffering to be an outstanding mark of their Messiah.

After they had received the power which had been promised them they knew what it meant to suffer and be strong. While the world looked on in surprise they suffered more, then still more until even strong men became suspicious and afraid of the uncanny power which they thought possessed these simple followers of this Jesus whom the records of both the Romans and the Jews showed to be dead.

A world torn to shreds by divisions of all kinds stood aghast at the Oneness of accord found among these who worshipped this One who bore the name Jesus. Their standing together was not for protection. That the Roman and the Jewish world of the first century could have understood. But that same world could not understand how or why people of such divergent backgrounds could be so at one with each other because they loved. Love was considered a sign of weakness. However, in the lives of these strange people it had become a source of a new kind of power. "Behold, how they love each other" was the surprising testimony of men brutalized by an abuse of power. Still more astonishing was the fact to the man in the street, as well as the man in the fortress and the mansion, that the power of these people was inspired by a man who was known for His gentleness. To be sure He had spoken of power but He had not even resisted when He was treated with contempt and injustice. He had not conducted Himself like a coward but neither had He shown the courage of a real man such as the standards of the day demanded. Not even when Pilate had been inclined to set Him free had this Jesus taken advantage of the Procurator's momentary attitude.

A deep seated uneasiness came over the leaders of both Romans and Jews as they saw that this movement of the followers of Jesus began to spread in every direction. All known methods of intimidation were of no avail. The greatest cruelties were borne with a strength that was beyond the understanding of those who knew no other way than coercion and intimidation. Added inflictions of cruelty might drive the sufferers under-ground but they did not stop the movement. They resisted all offers of clemency and all allurements of a better day. Their resistance was not against acts of injustice but against injustice itself, in any form. They had a winning way about them which moved men hardened to all allurements.

Men considered the followers of Jesus stubborn. They treated them as incorrigibles. At the end of their most desperate efforts they found that they had gotten nowhere. Their annoyance was turned to fear—that helpless kind of fear which is unbearable. No wonder the persecuters were at their wits' end.

Now and then someone of the ruling class realized that they were fighting a useless battle and might just as well find out what was really behind this movement. They began to discover things which were enlightening. They began to discover that the more or less crude forms of a fish inscribed on walls and various other places were not fetishes of superstitious people but a secret sign of one who really believed in the slogan, *Jesus Christos theos Uos Soter*—"Jesus Christ God's Son, Savior." "So that is the secret of their power?" What a discovery! Then some of them understood and followed the way they had persecuted.

Men of power, as the world in general defined that potent word, began to see the difference between one who is a healer and one who is a hurter. Luke had caught the significance of the difference. We can only guess how far Theophilus may have carried the significant message which he had received from his friend, the physician. Nobody knows how much the two letters which Luke wrote to Theophilus may have opened the eyes of leaders who frequented the home of the latter.

Others, mostly soldiers, often overheard their victims, by order of the powers that were, say things which had significant and suggestive meanings to him who allowed his ability to think to overcome his fears and prejudices. "Is he one of us?" was occasionally heard usually when it was whispered in the presence of a newcomer. That meant, is he also one of those who are true followers of Jesus?

"YE SHALL RECEIVE POWER!" He who had uttered these strange words had become the source of a power which the world did not understand, which it tried to dominate by the only kind of power it knew, and found itself frustrated. They who used this strange power were devoted to a person. To them religion was a matter of a right relationship with Him, whom they professed as their Leader, and with their neighbors, which meant all men everywhere, especially those who needed help, healing, saving. All this was not strange to the followers of Jesus. They had no theories to defend. They had lives of grateful usefulness to live as a testimony of their love for Him who had promised them power and had given it to them in full measure.

The word "ye" is very personal. It has very wide applications and very deep implications. One cannot read the four Gospels with any degree of care and not feel that the use of the word "ye" applies to the reader, especially when it has been used by Jesus. In the light of this fact the question of receiving power for the day in which we live becomes a very personal one. Would Jesus say to us, here assembled, "Ye shall receive power," if He were visibly present? The answer is that He does say it. Only about 5000 people accepted that power at Jerusalem during the period of the first Pentecost. They were still a hopeless minority so far as even the entire population of Palestine was concerned. So far as the world was concerned their number was negligible. Nevertheless they did receive power and the fruits of their changed lives were felt far and wide. This was true so long as the movement centered about the Kingdom of God idea. After it became the victim of designing leaders there entered into the movement all kinds of abuses of power which have brought great discredit to the history of the Church. This dual approach to the power which Jesus promised still constitutes one of the greatest difficulties for those who would follow Him in our day.

To receive means to accept. Jesus promised power to those who would receive the Holy Spirit. That meant an act of the will from within more than an act of imposition from without. Jesus had told His disciples some time before that He had prayed the Father to send them One whom they could call to their side. When they became receptive they received the Holy Spirit as naturally as the lungs receive air when the walls of the chest are raised or as a motor starts moving when the switch has been turned so that the mysterious power of electricity can flow through.

To accept means to meet the conditions which God has placed for certain experiences. As long as the disciples of Jesus were jealous of each other and quarreled about who was the "greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven" they were in no condition to receive the Holy Spirit. After they had spent ten days in the spirit of a great common interest and in consecrated, expectant effort Godward the Promise of God was fulfilled in their case. It is noteworthy that Luke guards against any undue emphasis on the demonstrative side of the experience by the repeated use of "as of." The reality of the experience lay much deeper. It was that reality which changed the men and women concerned from fear-bound victims of the old order to courageous pioneers of the new order ushered in by the Spirit of Jesus.

If one is willing to look about thoughtfully one can find people today who are guided by the Holy Spirit. They give evidence of the fact that they have Someone who stands by them. They spend no time advertising the fact by word of mouth. They demonstrate the fact by the way they meet life. They lose no time defending any theory about the fulfillment of the "Promise of the Father." They use the power resulting from that promise as quietly as a copper wire conveys electricity. "By their fruits ye shall know them" is still the standard of measurement for human beings in all walks of life. This is especially true of those who are receptive to the higher possibilities which God has in store for mankind.

The power which Jesus promised to His followers was given in order to encourage people to become more useful. That means that one enters into his part of the undertaking in a frame of mind which shows both thought and faithfulness. We are given the opportunity to grow through thoughtful observation in this wonderful universe into which we have been placed. We can show our gratitude for that privilege by being faithful in the part we play. The result of such an attitude is the experience of power in one's own life.

The power which Jesus promised His followers made them calm. It was the crowds who were excited. One marvels at the calmness of Peter throughout the Pentecost days. He does not appear like the excitable Peter of a few weeks earlier. He was no longer afraid of people, not even the most subtle and vulgar. He knew what he had found and he was ready to put it to good use for anybody who was in a receptive mood. He and his associates spoke so convincingly that men of many tongues understood their message about Jesus. The Holy Spirit, whom Jesus called the Spirit of Truth, speaks a language which all kinds of People can understand when it is conveyed through those who are receptive to Him and faithful in transmitting Him to others!

God is generous but He is not wasteful. He is at least as wise as an electrician. The latter wastes no time in trying to send an electric current through a wire of lead. Neither does God waste time or energy trying to send His Spirit into lives of lead-like selfishness, however sanctimonious, vocal or pretentious such lives may be.

Let us remember that the references of Jesus to the Holy Spirit and to the power which He was to bring to men were messages of encouragement. The fact that only relatively few people have been receptive to His message is no sign that He was mistaken. There

are not many outstanding members of any profession in the everyday affairs of life. That is no reflection on the respective professions. It only shows that there are too few who are willing to meet the conditions which are set for high achievement. The people who are most successful are not the ones who rail about the conditions or who try to impose their fractional understanding of the whole upon others as though they knew the last word on the subject. Those whose lives are the best demonstration of the presence of power are modest. They know their limitations but they are most willing to meet the conditions for receiving more power.

My young Friends. The needs of the world still issue a mighty call to meet them. It will take more power than you now have to achieve what ought to be done. That power lies in the realm of the spirit. Men still need things but they need the right kind of spirit to use those things as they ought to be used more than they need things. God has never revoked the promise which Jesus gave to men at a time of great discouragement. There are those who have and use that power in your day. Their number may be far smaller than it ought to be, but there are enough of those who are receptive to the power of God to become a source of encouragement to you. You may not find all of them in the field of so-called Christian Work. That makes the challenge all the greater for you. God reveals Himself through His power to anyone who is receptive to His Spirit!

Those who are truly receptive look forward to a life of discipline and dedication in order that the Will of Our Father may be achieved.

The Need for Discipline and Dedication

Discipline without dedication is mere drill. That is not enough for a life to be devoted to service in the Kingdom of God.

Jesus called His followers to be disciples—learners. He devoted Himself to a small group with the evident intention of training them for effectiveness. His purpose was to make them disciplined persons. They were to be obedient to the Will of the Father—in sympathy with that Will. He trained them in self-discipline.

Dedication means to be set apart for sacred use—real usefulness—to be devoted to a great end.

Thus, we see, that both discipline and dedication call for a worthy development of the self. That is achieved when the self responds to the opportunities which are open.

Jesus disciplined Himself. It is well for us to see how He did this. The types of experiences which He met are so closely akin to what we meet that we may well consider the ways in which He met them. As we study His re-actions to His experiences carefully, we discover that He dedicated Himself to higher levels as He disciplined Himself in answer to trying situations and new kinds of opportunities.

The first test which Jesus seems to have had to meet was the scorn of men who should have welcomed Him. They accused Him of being a law breaker. His answer was, "Think not that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets: I came not to destroy, but to fulfill." Instead of meeting head-on with an unjust and scornful accusation, He dedicated Himself to a more sympathetic attitude toward the will of His Father, and taught His accusers that attitude.

Scornful men also accused Jesus of being conceited. He was just a home boy who had come back and need not think that He could tell them anything. There was no use staying so He left the town. As He went out He touched those who could not get away because they were sick. Perhaps a few of them were not afraid. The point is that He dedicated Himself to the nobler way of helping even under difficulties.

Scorn, like, every other kind of fear, becomes cumulative. Nobody ever denied the fact that Jesus was doing good. They tried to place His work into a false light and tauntingly said that He was in league with Belzebug—the devil—in the doing of His work.

That was a stinging accusation and may have come rather unexpectedly. Jesus disciplined Himself to meet even that kind of injustice. He met the cowardly thrust by pointing out that a house divided against itself must fall. That was dedicating Himself to His great cause in a way which everybody could understand and which left Him a living proof that He was not in league with Belzebug. He had become a Helper in a new sense. It is interesting to note how effectively He taught this to all who were willing to think straight, including His ignoble accusers.

Scorn stooped to its lowest level when men taunted Jesus as He hung on the cross. Note the following quotations from the Gospels: "These things therefore the soldiers did. And they that passed by reviled Him, wagging their heads, and saying, 'Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save Thyself. If Thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross.' Likewise also the chief priests mocking Him, with the scribes and elders, said, 'He saved others; Himself He cannot save. If He be the Christ, the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe Him. He trusted in God; let Him deliver Him now, if He will have Him; for He said, I am the Son of God.' And they that were crucified with Him reviled Him. And the soldiers also mocked Him, coming to Him and offering to Him vinegar, and saying, 'If Thou be the King of the Jews, save Thyself.'"

This was one time when the majority was wrong. Can you imagine any group, least of all men who prided themselves upon their authority in the field of religion, stooping to such a low level? Had they not heard His prayer at the time when He was being subjected to the excruciating pain of being nailed to the cross? Did the words, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do," mean nothing to men whose lives were officially devoted to the cause of that Father? Theirs was the answer of human selfishness in the hour of supposed triumph! Words cannot answer such a situation. The life of Jesus, including His experience on the cross, was His answer. It took self-discipline of the highest order to meet such a situation. He met it through a dedication to the Father which was stronger than the worst temptation which evil-minded men could invent. He had received that power for which He had prayed for others from the Father to whom He had prayed! We do well to learn to read the foregoing incident on the cross with the possibility in mind that the pronoun "He" may be changed to "we" or "ye" at any time during our period of service. When that happens we learn to appreciate the fuller

meaning of a life of self-discipline, strengthened by a dedication to Him who did more than any of us can ever hope to do and therefore suffered more from men of scorn.

Jesus had to discipline Himself to meet the inventions of a second type of mind—that of basically dishonest people. Most of these also belonged to the privileged classes and ranks. They had had many opportunities to become helpers; they had preferred the very doubtful satisfaction of developing into hecklers. They were characterized by cunning and cleverness, and by a lack of wisdom. They lived lives which were not dependable. Therefore they were suspicious of others. Kipling may well have had such in mind when he wrote, "Many religious people are deeply suspicious. They seem—for purely religious purposes, of course—to know more about iniquity than the unregenerate."

It is marvelous to note how Jesus disciplined Himself to meet the catch questions of these perverted men. They were a cowardly lot, and He knew it, yet He tried to bring them helpful information in answer to their catch questions.

The unhappy governmental arrangements between Rome and Jerusalem gave them many an opportunity for plying their favorite stock in trade. This was to brand their victim as either unpatriotic toward Caesar or as disloyal toward the Sanhedrin. Their outstanding example of this kind of trickery was to ask Jesus, "Tell us therefore, what thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not?" That question might have been asked honestly and for information only. On this occasion, however, we are told definitely that the Pharisees—note who it was—had held a counsel in order to catch Him in His talk and that they had approached him with hypocritical words. They had not even dared to speak to Him personally but had gone into league with the Herodians, whom they detested, and taught them to "soften" Jesus for their trick. The answer of Jesus was, "Why make ye trial of me, ye hypocrites? Show me the tribute money." When the money had been produced, Jesus asked them, "Whose is this image and superscription?" Their statement that it was Caesar's brought forth this meaningful answer from Jesus, "Render therefore unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and unto God the things that are God's." No wonder that those who heard Him marvelled and went away. They had heard a cryptic but very constructive message. There had been no tirade against hypocritical men. They had been told plainly what kind of men they were and were immediately given a very fine chance to think themselves out of

their self-imposed dilemma without losing face, unless they chose to continue to do as they had done afore time.

Place yourself into the situation of Jesus in the above occurrence sometime when you have an hour or two for uninterrupted thinking. Do this until you feel a just appreciation for the self-discipline which it must have taken to meet such a complex setting. Self-discipline means to hold one's self to the course of following through the orderly arrangements of God. This Jesus did by continuously and progressively dedicating Himself through increasing faithfulness to Him whom He called "My Father." That is why He could overlook the insulting attitudes of men who were officially committed to do the will of God. His plea for fair play toward Caesar, whom they despised, and toward God, whom they professed to follow, was a supreme challenge to the Pharisees to come clean. For us it is a classic which we cannot afford to underestimate as we face the complex situations which confront this generation.

People who were basically and essentially dishonest persecuted Jesus much about the Sabbath Day. To them it was a burden which they tried to glorify with childish and hypocritical traditions. One wonders what one of these step-counting Pharisees would have done if he had seen a child in real need of help a dozen steps beyond the distance which tradition permitted him to take on the Sabbath! Perhaps their attitude, at the time when Jesus healed the man whom they had neglected for 38 years, may give us some idea as to what might have happened to the child. Other cases to be considered are the man with the withered hand, the man born blind (John 9:1ff.) or the disciples walking through grain fields and plucking the ripened ears of grain, removing the chaff and then eating the grain. In every case there was harsh criticism on the part of so-called religious leaders. What can you expect from men who can take such attitudes and justify them on the basis of obeying "traditions of men" which violate the great orderly arrangements of God? We do well to waste no time worrying about why men can do such things. We need to ask how we can discipline ourselves to meet the situations which they create, and do it in a constructive way. That means increased dedication to The Way!

Jesus had to deal much with naively selfish men. These also took themselves very seriously but were more harmless than the designing group of hecklers.

The ruler of the feast at the wedding at Cana was one of these. He seems to have been a kind of combination between chef and

contractor. His scheme was to make an extra profit by substituting cheaper wine after people had become surfeited. That was dishonest and he knew it. That was doubly out of place at a Jewish wedding feast because it reflected on the home which gave the feast among a people who had high ideals about home life. When the mother of Jesus saw the approaching embarrassment of a shortage of wine at the wedding feast, she came to Jesus about the matter. His reply, "What to me and to thee, lady?" is an indication that He was not through. Jesus was not through with this selfish chef. She told the over-worked slaves to do whatever Jesus asked them to do. He told them to fill the water pots for ceremonial cleansing. That was unreasonable from the viewpoint of tradition. From the viewpoint of the kind of person Jesus was it was a stimulating adventure. The slaves replied by filling the pots to the brim—a thing never done in order to avoid spilling the water. In the case of the slaves at this feast it showed good will toward the One who asked them.

When the guilty chef found himself face to face with the fact that a new supply of the contract grade of wine had been made available he flew into a rage, confessed the trick and excused himself with the age old and futile excuse, "Well, everybody is doing it." Jesus let the matter rest there. We can rest assured that the family in whose home this had happened did not let it rest there, nor did those who were planning wedding feasts in the near future, nor did those young people who had just found themselves and each other during these days of feasting.

The leaders at the feasts who crowded into the dining hall in order to get the chief seats were given a constructive lesson. A person with less training in self-discipline and with less devotion to the cause which he represented might have made a cause for useless friction out of the setting.

The rich men in the temple treasury could say nothing in answer to the comparison between them and the poor widow who had given her living. However, they had much reason to do some honest thinking. Besides, the crowd whose praise they had hoped to get had an opportunity to learn something about religion which their leadership had denied them.

The men who abused those practices which are so much a part of real religion that Jesus took them for granted, must have felt pretty uncomfortable, unless they mended their ways. Giving alms, praying and fasting took on a new meaning after the discriminating remarks about these subjects by Jesus. If the leaders resented Him and increased their selfish attitudes to the point of

killing Jesus, there were always the common people who heard Him gladly because what He said made sense for them. This had not been true of the kind of temple and synagogue services to which they had been subjected.

Anyone who has read the Gospels with any degree of care can multiply these examples of naive selfishness and the way in which Jesus showed that He had disciplined Himself to meet them. There is nothing cheaply clever about the way Jesus met these instances. One quite naturally feels that here are the results of deep, honest dedication clearly portrayed in ways which almost seem casual. There is nothing artificial about a well-disciplined and truly devoted life.

The hypocrites were probably the most trying people for Jesus. They had opportunities enough to live real lives. Their childish and naive ways of pretending to be what they were not called forth many challenging comments from Jesus. Their lives were so unreal that He sometimes pronounced woes upon them in the hope that they would become more realistic in their views of life. We do Him wrong when we read His pronouncements upon the hypocrites as though they were outbursts of anger simply because He uses the word "woe." It is well to study the setting of each case and see how Jesus made His appeal to the people whom He addressed.

Jesus manifested a very deep desire to help everyone to learn to be himself at his best. That naturally did not fit into the thinking of those who seemed to find a childish satisfaction in being mere actors instead of living well-rounded lives. One marvels at His self-control in the face of some of the experiences which came to Him because there were so many among the official leaders of His own people who walked the way of glorified self-deception.

Pride of office was not confined to the Jews. Herod was as vain as a spoiled child and as wiley as a fox. Jesus characterized him clearly when some of the Jewish leaders thought to frighten Him about Herod. He not only called the king a fox but also told those who had tried to impress Jesus with supposedly imminent danger that they might go tell Herod where He could be found. This attitude on the part of Jesus shows two things. 1. He did His best to teach the men who had tried to frighten Him. Whether Herod ever heard what Jesus said about him is of little consequence. His persecutors had occasion to realize that Jesus was no more afraid than He had often asked His followers to be. 2. It shows that Jesus knew what He was about and that such things as human pride could not change the measure of His stride.

Pilate was another official with whom Jesus had to deal. Several scenes at the trials of Jesus show that Pilate seemed to have a bit more of insight into the things for which Jesus stood than did either Herod or the official leaders of the Jewish people. Pilate at least was surprised enough to wonder about this strange Jesus several times. He tried official brusqueness at first. The answer of Jesus, "My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now is my kingdom not from hence" caused Pilate to ask, "Art thou a king then?" Jesus considered this question worthy of a first rate answer. That is worth noting. He answered Pilate by saying, "Thou sayest that I am a king—you said it, I am a king! To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the Truth. Every one that is of the Truth heareth my voice." The answer of Pilate, "What is truth?" may be interpreted in many ways. It is significant that he left Jesus in order to tell His accusers that he found no fault at all in Jesus. The fact that he later yielded to the organized and fanatical accusations against Jesus is no sign that the efforts on the part of the latter to influence Pilate toward a better understanding of life were altogether lost. At least it is interesting that Jesus succeeded in making a noteworthy impression upon a political schemer like Pilate. It is also noteworthy that He showed a self-control which could state a number of interesting facts, with more light than heat, under trying circumstances. No one can question the devotion of Jesus to the cause to which His Father had appointed Him.

The problem of suffering confronted Jesus at all times and in many ways. He saw suffering in body, mind and spirit all about Him. He was deeply moved by the suffering of others. His dedication to the will of the Father made Him the wonderful Healer that He proved to be.

In the realm of the body Jesus faced especially hunger and disease. He not only provided much relief for the sufferers, but often suffered with them very keenly.

In the realm of the mind Jesus found much confusion among the people of His day. Their conditions were of little concern to the leadership which oppressed them. To Jesus these people appeared as sheep without shepherds and as blind men being led by blind leaders. He made urgent appeals to those who had the opportunity to improve matters and encouraged the common people by an attitude of helpfulness. He felt quite clearly that man

has a primary share in dispelling confusion and applied Himself to teach men this truth.

Jesus found the spirits of men cramped through fears. This made men unwilling to trust themselves to Him who had come to help them. This was not true only of the so-called lower classes among which fears and superstitions are so often found. We find such examples as the rich young ruler who had been well trained and belonged to the favored class. He felt the need of a better spiritual understanding. He was courteous and definite in His request. He could answer the pointed questions of Jesus very promptly. When He was given the solution of His problem he retired sadly. He was afraid to try to achieve the thing he had asked for because he had become so thing-minded that the conditions necessary for real spiritual strength seemed too much for him. There were at least two sad persons that day, the young ruler and Jesus who had tried His best to help the young man who had so ardently appealed to Him.

Jesus disciplined Himself to do the will of the Father by growing in His dedication to the Father. It is interesting to read the stories of His temptation and of His crucifixion with this in mind. Both show an attitude of major proportions and of superior motives. Nevertheless the experiences which had come to Jesus within less than three short years show an increased strength. The fact that Jesus emphasized His relationship to the Father more and more during the last months of His sojourn on earth is worthy of our careful consideration. There had been much self-discipline between these two important experiences and there had been an increasing devotion to the Father as the Counterpart of that discipline. Jesus not only felt the need of the Father more as the days of opposition became increasingly apparent; He also appreciated the Father more as His great Counterpart. His first approach was characterized by His use of the mind; the second approach was clearly that of the whole of Himself which we designate by the term Spirit. In this respect He was truly what He called Himself, a Son of Man. If men generally understood this fact better there would be less strain because of the so-called problem between youth and old age. Youth demands a reason for everything. That is according to the orderly arrangement of God. When this urge for knowledge and understanding has been beaten out on the anvil of experience it becomes the instrument through which the whole personality expresses itself.

My young Friends. When the evening shadows begin to fall upon your generation you will look upon human beings who still have the

same needs and capacities which men have always had. You will also see the differences between those who have patiently disciplined themselves toward a great and noble end and those who have felt themselves wiser than their friends because they chose the path of least resistance rather than the road of consecrated hard work. You will find many customs and institutions changed. That must be expected in the aftermath of the uprooting through which mankind is now going.

The cause of education will be subjected to many trying experiences. More than ever before it will become apparent that youth needs to be trained for life much more than for the achievement of degrees and other insignia of one's ability to master certain assigned lessons. These insignia will mean all the more when they will emphasize the value of life as a whole. One hopes very earnestly that the day of, "sling it at 'em" will be gone forever. The world has never been able to use helpfully men who were trained in unrelated grooves whether they were complacent or fanatical. It can use them less helpfully in the days ahead of you. It will take a discipline of the whole being to achieve the efficiency necessary to make a truly worthy contribution to humanity. Such discipline does not mean mere opposition to things as they are. It means more efficient service so that things as they are may become the things that ought to be. God has endowed man with a mind to think that through and then act as an intelligent agent under the guidance of His Spirit.

The orderly arrangements of God apply to churches as well as to schools. It is easy to say that if the churches had stood together there would have been no such upheaval among the human inhabitants of the earth as we witness now. It is very important that men learn to say that they believe in an orderly arrangement of God for Human Nature as well as for Nature in general. Man's self-centered madness has not changed the orderly ways of Nature. The celestial bodies still run their courses on schedule time, and man can depend on them without the shadow of a doubt. The instincts of animal life have not been changed by the follies of man. The humblest grass or flower still springs from the same kind of seed, draws its sustenance from Mother Earth and from the air and lifts its head toward the Great Light of the day for secret strength. Nobody doubts the continuation of these evidences of the orderly arrangements decreed by the Great Thinker of this Universe. Since man can do nothing about this part of the Universe, except use it as God intended that he should, then it behooves man to use his best judgment to do as much and as well

in the realm of the spirit where his record to date has been very disappointing to all concerned. That is the field in which Young Christian Workers need to interest themselves to the best of their opportunities and their abilities.

Christ is calling you of this generation to render great service in His Name and under the guidance of His Spirit. His promise is still good that, "Ye shall receive power," which power is to be used for the good of all mankind. It is also still true that such service calls for discipline and dedication. No man can change these things. To try to do so leads to confusion. We have had enough of that. The opportunity-responsibilities which are before you constitute a call to you to be yourselves at your best and then fare forth to do your best. That will mean the kind of preparation which really fits you to become the kind of helpers who are needed for your day—healers of body, mind and spirit. The love of a little child whom you have helped along the way will mean more at the end of the road than the plaudits of the greatest of the world who praise your words.

I wish you well as you, in your way, make contributions to the good of someone, under the guidance of the Spirit of Him who loved little children and helped them find their way; who encouraged youth as they faced the trying experiences of their storm and stress years; who honored motherhood, real and potential, and championed the rights of womankind toward higher ends; who stood by men in the prime of life while they bore the brunt of the battle of human existence, and who gently and beautifully touched the lives of the aged as they faced the lengthening shadows of the evening of life.



